

The current year budget for the State of CT includes funding for CT DEEP's Aquatic Invasive Species Program. Three-quarters of the \$200,000 in funding went toward a municipal grant program with the balance toward the Boating Education Assistant Program, which resulted in very limited aquatic invasive species inspections conducted at state boat ramps, and partial funding of the State's Invasive Plant Coordinator, a critically important position in the fight against invasive species.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed budget for FY16, unveiled on February 18, 2015, does not provide funding for this program. Unequivocally, one year of town grant funding will **NOT** arrest the rapid escalation of invasive aquatic weeds in CT's lakes. States around the country that are making progress in controlling aquatic weeds, thus supporting lake zone property values, town grand lists and local economies, have ongoing grant programs and State staff available to assist towns. This is what Connecticut needs!

Please again fund the AIS line of the CT DEEP's budget so efforts to rid our lakes of invasive species can continue!

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